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Evaluation research report

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University of Bath

Commissioned by: Challenge 59
Supported by: University of Bath Alumni Fund

Summary of evaluation findings

From January – June 2018, researchers at the University of Bath carried out an academic evaluation of the arts based programme, **Challenge 59**.

Challenge 59 seeks to empower school children and their teachers to explore health and wellbeing issues within their communities. Through dance and film, children explored ideas about psychosocial health: thinking (mental), feeling (emotional), relating (social) and being (spiritual).

Challenge 59 worked across 3 primary schools with 6 teachers and 195 students from Years 1-4. For the evaluation, data was collected from a sample of children in the 3 participating schools across Newham and Tower Hamlets in London.

Future implications

- Further positive impact could be generated through rolling out Challenge 59 in schools across the UK, as it fosters lifelong learning about health and wellbeing amongst younger generations.
- Challenge 59 could be developed as a collaborative project across multiple sectors with buy in from different stakeholders: including schools, local authorities and dance, health and arts organisations.

Read the full report and find out more about the evaluation here:
www.challenge59.com

Watch the Challenge 59 documentary here:
[youtube/JhUd34BaWw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhUd34BaWw)

Commissioned by: Challenge 59
Evaluated by: University of Bath



INTEGRITY * FUN
*Joyful * MOVING * Change*

CREATIVE * INSPIRING * IMPORTANT
DANCE *Energising*
Authentic **LIFE** *HEALTHY*
ACCESSIBLE *Engaging*

Comments about the Premiere event

"When I was doing it film-making, I felt special, excited, surprised and famous"
Sofia, year 4

"I felt confident and proud because I'd finished something... I like being energetic and fun, and I like being resilient, strong and I don't like it when I stay at home"
Aarav, year 3

Through movement, children learned about the emotional and social aspects of health and wellbeing that connects their minds and bodies.

Challenge 59 provided children with the opportunity to dance and move freely as a way to relieve stress. This is particularly important given that children do not always have opportunities for free play living in high density housing.

Film-making engaged children's voices through creative expression. While some children's 59-second films explored holistic views of health, others reproduced conventional narratives about nutrition and exercise.

Children felt more confident and excited about new ways to express their feelings through movement. This embodied confidence translated into their lives beyond Challenge 59.

Introduction to the evaluation

Upon hearing a fast food chain's promise to serve customers within 59 seconds, Jo Rhodes conceived Challenge 59 (C59) in order to ask: what else could be done in 59 seconds to empower children to live healthy lifestyles?

C59 utilises dance and movement to engage the children through embodied learning (learning through and with the body) about health (moving, doing, feeling, thinking). This differs to typical approaches to health education as it allows young people to think through mind/body connections. The participatory approach provides children with the opportunity to creatively express themselves by storyboarding and bringing to life their own high quality films that visualise healthy living messages.

C59 partnered up with University of Bath in order to independently evaluate the project, and contribute to the evidence base for this arts based programme.

Evaluation methods

The evaluation methods consisted of focus groups, surveys and interviews. The focus groups included creative methods and games such as artistic drawing tasks and sticker tables. The surveys included both qualitative and quantitative questions that focused on children's experiences of embodied movement. All names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

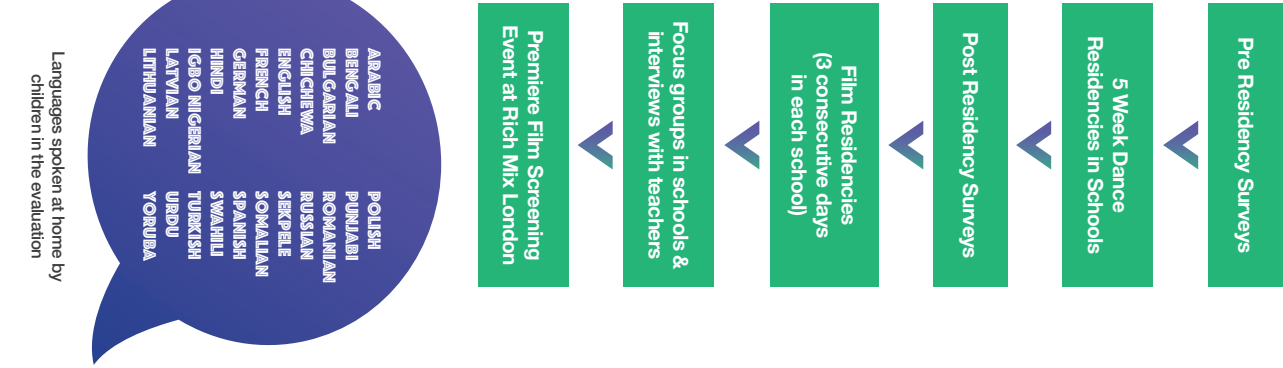
Surveys	Collected pre and post dance residencies 38 respondents between the ages of 7-9
Creative focus groups	Conducted after the film residencies 1 focus group with 4 children aged 4-5 (year 1) 2 focus groups, each with 8 children aged 7-9 (years 3-4)
Teacher interviews	Five teachers interviewed in total

Sample from schools

C59 worked across 3 primary schools with 6 teachers and 195 students from Years 1-4. For the evaluation, data was collected from a sample of children in the 3 participating schools across Newham and Tower Hamlets in London. These urban communities have diverse populations, with particular low-income areas experiencing deprivation, poverty, social exclusion and inequality¹.

The survey data comes from the responses of 38 Key Stage 2 children. The survey respondents ranged from 7-9 with 39.5% identifying as girls and 60.5% identifying as boys and encapsulating a broad range of backgrounds. When asked about the languages the households spoke at home, 23 different languages were provided.

C59 programme and research timeline



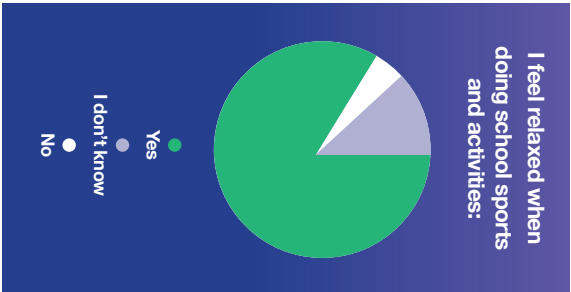
¹ Greater London Authority, 2017. *Health inequalities strategy*. London.

Dance and film experience

Children expressed enjoyment throughout the creative process of C59. This overwhelmingly positive experience was often contrasted with children's experiences of physical education and other leisure practices in their lives. From initially feeling apprehensive about dance and new ways of moving, children spoke of the calming effects of dance and movement in school. As embodied practices that involved individual and shared learning, dance and film-making facilitated a collaborative approach to children's learning about health and wellbeing. The embodied learning process offered from more cognitively orientated classroom based activities that required sitting still (the initial survey showed **35% reported an inability or uncertainty with regards to working quietly in class**). In this section, we explore the appeal and benefits of using creative engagement methods, such as dancing and film production, in primary education.

Overcoming apprehensions about dance

At the start of the dance residencies, some of the children initially felt shy and nervous about the uncertainties of dancing, while others felt self-conscious when moving in front of their peers. Literature has identified how a reluctance (shyness, lack of confidence, embarrassment) to become involved in physical activity can be related to stereotypes about being 'sporty' connected to gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic differences. By the end of the dance workshops many of the children stated that they felt more confident and excited about these new ways to express their feelings through movement with **79% reporting that they enjoyed activities where they could be artistic or creative**.



"I'm balancing and wiggling. I felt worried and excited... Because everyone is looking at my balance and everyone will laugh. In the first, and then at the end I felt happy and excited"
Cyra, Year 1

"I had children that wouldn't participate right at the beginning, they were really really shy... By the end of the sessions they were moving around, they were dancing, they were smiling, it was so good to see."
Aisha, teacher



Calming effects of dance and movement

Children enjoyed being able to dance and move freely, as they could relieve stress and release energy in ways that made them feel more calm and confident. From the survey responses, the majority of children reported feeling more relaxed when doing school sports and activities after C59.

Teachers also shared how free movement was helpful in breaking up the school day:

"It's so important for them to be active, there is so much pressure on the curriculum for year 1, that the children they are very young they are 5 and 6, they have to sit at desks and do academic subjects for a large part of the day. So as soon as you let them run around they absolutely love it, they need to do it, we absolutely don't do enough of it."
Joanna, teacher

Dance as an embodied practice of learning about health and wellbeing

Dance was a unique embodied activity that invoked engagement through movement. The moving body was very much central to learning about health and wellbeing, and dance was a creative way of experimenting with new ideas and capacities. During the dance residencies, children explored broader ideas about health as connected to what they 'do' every day. Rather than just focussing on exercise and nutrition, children learned about the emotional and social aspects of health and wellbeing that connected their minds and bodies.

Niamh, researcher:
Did you learn anything about being healthy in Challenge 59?

Leah, year 1:
About your mind

Cyra, year 1:
Laughing is good for you because it's healthy

Sierra, teacher
They learned about the four elements, mind, being, feeling, relating

Samara, teacher
I got them to think about how I could use my body to express myself, or express how I'm thinking or what I believe, I can use my body to show that



Some of the boys in particular felt more self-conscious and reluctant to dance, yet by the end of the workshops they enjoyed the new dance and movements. In this way dance helped shift gender stereotypes that limit participation.

"I felt nervous about dancing in front of people."
Liam, year 4

"It was when he saw his peers moving around, having fun, really letting themselves go, that encouraged him."
Aisha, teacher

Dance was inclusive and accessible to all children, irrespective of age, gender, ability, culture or language.

"The children in year 1 are quite energetic and they all gave it a go. I have some children on the special needs register, and you couldn't tell, from working with them they had access to it, they were participating really fully, so I think that was great."
Kate, teacher





Appeal of film-making

Children had multiple and differing engagement in the C59 process. Children adopted many different roles in this creative process, from storyboarding to acting and filmmaking.

Film-making was a new and engaging method for children. In the initial survey **48% felt unable to share ideas about health with their community**, children enjoyed having the opportunity C59 gave them to be recognised and to visually share their messages. They felt special to have been selected to take part in the film-making. Teachers explained that the children involved rarely received opportunities like this.

"I drew a picture of me and Sofia, I felt... important and famous because I was really excited because we were chosen."

Chloe, year 4

"I like Challenge 59 because we can become famous...When I was doing it [film-making], I felt special, excited, surprised and famous, because when we were doing it was fun because we were... not everyone gets this big chance to be filmed in front of a professional camera, it felt really lucky."

Sofia, year 4



After C59,
94%
of children felt
more confident
expressing
themselves in
front of others

Multiple feelings produced through the filming: Being nervous and confident

The creative processes of the dance residencies were important in helping children become more spatially aware of their own and others' bodies. Learning about trust, communication and the social aspect of dance helped children during their choreographed dances in the film-making.

Filming the 59 second films generated a range of different responses and feelings. Some children initially felt nervous and afraid of judgement when performing in front of their peers. Other children felt a combination of nerves and excitement about something so new and different to their school routines. In particular, children experienced a sense of ownership as they felt proud of their involvement and artistic outcomes.

"I felt shy, excited and happy because I never had a chance of filming in front of a camera."

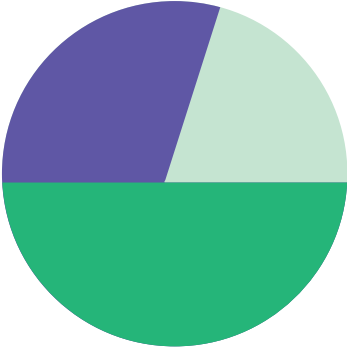
Maya, year 4

"The thing I liked about Challenge 59 is that I can do something that I've never really done before."

Max, year 3

There were some differences in terms of gender, with many boys demonstrating a notable increase in confidence which may be related to overcoming stereotypes about masculinity and dance.

Children felt more confident about...



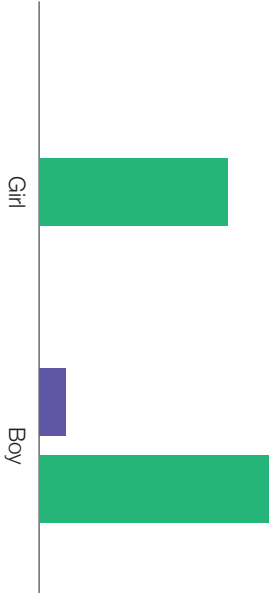
● Performing and expressing themselves in front of others

● Dancing and moving

● Trying and learning new things

Increase in confidence divided by gender:

● No ● Yes



Different health messages

Through making a storyboard with their teachers and producing their 59 second films, C59 enabled children to explore health messages from different angles. For example, ideas about what makes children healthy or unhealthy, how screen time and play time relate and how friends could help a 'couch potato' enjoy moving. The children's films also captured a more holistic view of health, as some children emphasised the power of moving and feeling healthy and strong.

"Our film was about you don't always have to sit down and not do anything, you can just be active, if you don't be active then you're gonna be lazy for the rest of your life."

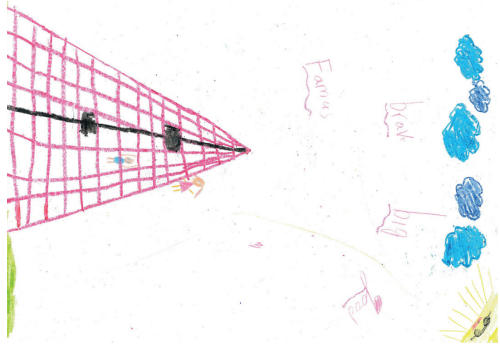
Cornac, year 3

"I felt my most confident when I was acting and when I was jumping from each place. I felt proud of my acting and that I was in a film about fitness. I felt really excited because I'd never acted on a camera before. It [the film] was about health and being fit and strong."

Callie, year 3

"The healthy side we stormed to the top and then the unhealthy side were too tired and basically hanged down from the climbing frame to show they were tired and exhausted."

Issie, year 4



Situating the dance and film experience in the context of children's lives

The C59 experience was important in everyday aspects in children's lives, for example in children's family contexts. Children felt excited to tell family members and share the health messages with family members, while the process helped to provide a sense of continuity and achievement even if children were going through change and uncertainty in their lives.

Practising resilience

Children's experiences of dance and film had a significant impact outside the immediate workshops. Supporting children's resiliency was a primary objective of C59. As a result of taking part, children felt more confident to try new things and this embodied confidence translated into their lives beyond the project.

Resilience was framed by C59 in terms of persevering, never giving up through times of change and uncertainty, while collectively building trust and feeling positively supported by peers.

The accounts of children and teachers also identified the social context (poverty or income, housing, play space) that shaped their sense of resilience in positive and negative ways. Children felt collectively more confident to try new things and overall more children enjoyed going to school after taking part in C59.

"There's me, and I like to rap, I felt confident and proud because I'd finished something... I like being energetic and fun, and I like being resilient, strong and I don't like it when I stay at home"
Aarav, year 3

"Strong, fast, try new things, active, and never give up."
Max, year 3



Sharing experiences with family members and learning through C59

Children felt excited to talk about their films and share the health messages behind their films with other family members. C59 had a positive impact on the wider social context of children's lives, as children disseminated important health messages to families. Completing C59 provided children with a sense of pride and achievement.

"I was excited and my mum was excited, because she was excited for me so I can be in front a camera because she's knows how it's new to me."
Chloe, year 4

"My sister and my mum were involved because they were happy for me and my sister was a bit sad because she couldn't do any filming, my sister felt very jealous."
Yara, year 4

The importance of free play: C59 provided children with opportunities that they often did not have

There were a number of unexpected outcomes from C59, including the importance of free play in the context of difficulties children faced in accessing open spaces for leisure in high density housing areas.

Children enjoyed being outdoors and having the opportunity to move freely during the dance workshops, which was a welcomed break from their class work. Teachers highlighted how the children need these opportunities to relax and freedoms to move. While children mentioned well known messages about being active and reducing screen time, what was more interesting were other comments about the desire for safe and attractive spaces. In the context of the wider challenges that children face living in urban environments that limit active mobility, children articulated the need to have access to open spaces to be happy and healthy.

The survey data showed that children identified four main health issues within their communities, including diet and exercise, the need for more safe, attractive spaces (e.g. cleaner streets, no pollution, more green spaces), 'too much time in front of screens, and also the need for more hospitals.

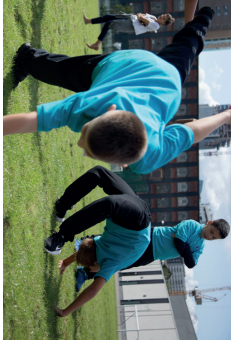
Children were aware of the health benefits of exercise but identified barriers such as lack of clean safe spaces and distractions such as screen time on devices. C59 provided them with the opportunity to engage in exercise and understand wellbeing despite these challenges. For children, the freedom to play and run around outside was a way to relieve stress and anxieties in everyday spaces.

Annaleise, researcher: Do you prefer playing at home or at school?

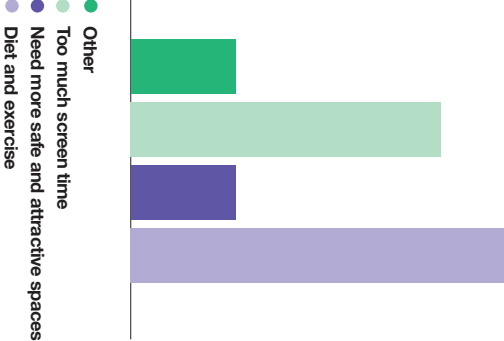
Learn: school, because they have a playground
Cyra: a big playground where you can play with your friends
Thomas: school, I live in a building and I only have a balcony
Muhammad: I have a balcony, in the big blue building I have a bike

Annaleise:
So at home where do you go when you want to run around?

Learn: At home I just run on the stairs
Thomas: I just play football with my brother



What are the most important health issues for children in your community?



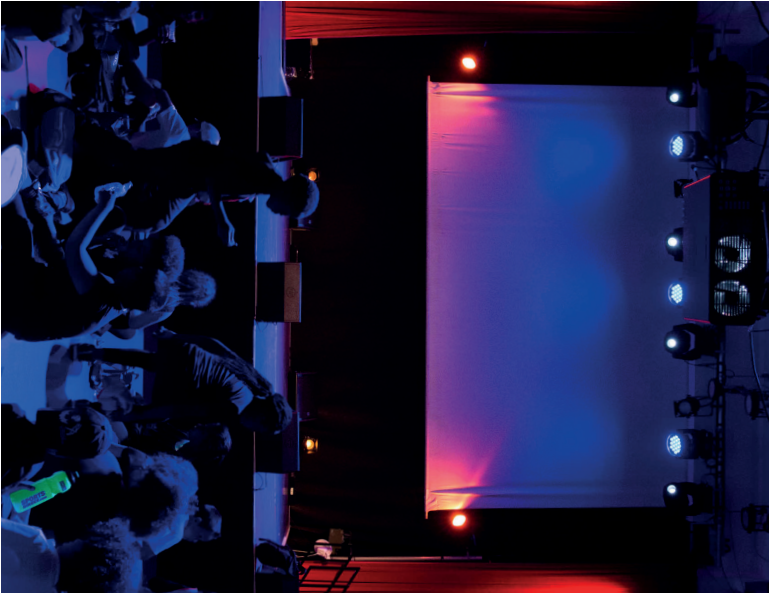
"The children said we like to go outside, we like to play, we like to come to school because we get to play with our friends. So then they got to express that. Especially because we're in Tower Hamlets, there's a lot of chockablock flats, so a lot of them don't have access to their own gardens or going to the park, so they got to express it that way, so it was quite nice."
Samara, teacher

Film premiere event

C59 culminated at a premiere event, held at Rich Mix, to celebrate and showcase the children's 59-second films, live dance performances and the C59 documentary. The event welcomed children from the three participating schools, and professionals across the dance, health and education sectors. The following data was gathered through qualitative fieldnotes recorded by the evaluation team, along with an online survey completed at the premiere by professionals and teachers (n=16) to seek feedback about their experiences of the C59 process and premiere event.

Key health issues communicated in the films:

- Risks of screen time
- Healthy eating
- Being active
- Inequality
- Lack of open spaces
- Creativity
- Sense of community
- Mental health

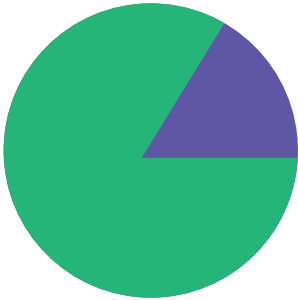


100%
of professionals
agreed that...

In comparison to traditional methods, C59 was a more creative approach to children's health education because it engaged them in moving and making messages that were relevant.

Dance has the potential to play an important role in health promotion where movement meets creative expression.

All professionals questioned agreed that the 59 second films highlighted health issues in an accessible way:



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Interesting and inspiring elements of the Premiere:

- Children expressing themselves creatively
- High quality of content and film production
- How engaged the children were
- Children's sense of achievement and celebrating each other's work
- Film-making was an accessible creative approach to thinking about health and wellbeing
- Supporting joined up approaches to education
- Potential for wider roll out in schools
- Positive teacher engagement



"The process and product (making documentary and producing 59 secs) is an incredible way to make mental and physical health accessible to all audiences. It provides a foundation for stakeholders who influence young persons social, educational and well being life styles to make change, using this as a tool to communicate and further develop new opportunities."

School staff

"Children are so creative and really understand the health issues they face."

Dance professional

"The videos were visually stunning. The children's work shined through in the choreography- you could see it was their own work. The documentary and live performance was a great way to disseminate the project."

Drama education practitioner



Future directions and implications

C59 is more than a conventional health promotion intervention that delivers messages 'at' children. Instead, it starts with engaging children's embodied pleasure and holistic understandings of wellbeing while introducing them to alternative ways of 'doing' and thinking about health. C59 addresses education and curriculum priorities through a non-competitive, child-centred approach to health education using the arts.

C59 is a unique and effective approach to children's health education, with an underpinning ethos of participation that embraces:

- Dance as a tool and vehicle for learning about health
- Artistry and creative processes with children
- Film as a way to empower children to visualise and respond to community issues
- Children as enablers of positive change in local communities

Putting children at the heart of C59

A key strength of the C59 ethos was that it empowered children to co-create ideas and representations of health issues that engaged with well-known health promotion discourses (individual exercise, nutrition and screen time) but were significant to them in particular ways. The health aspects of relating and feeling came through in certain films to emphasise wellbeing as linked to shared experiences. The films were representative of the local demographic and importantly, they were made by the children, for audiences in their communities.

Supporting teachers' pedagogic practice

Teachers were engaged throughout C59, from initially attending the CPD event at the Rich Mix in November 2017, to seeing their children's films through to completion and showcasing their important work in June 2018.

The Dance & Film Education resources for teachers were easy to use and flexible to children's needs, while teachers highlighted they would like to continue to use these resources in their lessons beyond C59.

Teachers emphasised how the C59 process has had a positive impact and they have become more reflective on their own teaching practice. Teachers emphasised how they feel more motivated to incorporate movement into classroom learning since C59, thinking about new ways to continue to bring creative dance into the classroom.

"I felt happy, excited and always I was smiling."
Maya, year 4



"Keep doing it (C59), it's brilliant, it's so important for children."
Kate, teacher

"The resources were quite adaptable, so there's instructions on how you could use them, but then it's quite open, so you can adapt it for your school and your class."
Sierra, teacher

"It was amazing, it was so beneficial for myself and for the children. Reflecting upon my own practice, how much dance are we moving, why can't I just get them up, after a few minutes sitting down, get them up get them to move around... and do that more often throughout the day."
Aisna, teacher

Learning from the evaluation and future directions

C59 is a unique way to engage schools, families and children through a more holistic perspective on 'doing' and thinking about healthy lifestyles. In particular, C59 has received interest from multiple sectors: including the arts, education, health, sport and local government. We see the possibilities and further positive impact that C59 could generate if rolled out in schools across the UK, as it supports lifelong health and wellbeing amongst younger generations.

Thinking about the future, C59 could be developed as a collaborative project across multiple sectors with buy in from different stakeholders (e.g. schools, local councils, dance, health and arts organisations). A more sustainable co-production model would involve local organisations and groups coming together to collaborate and contribute funding towards the delivery of a regional C59 programme. The unique and collaborative nature of C59 lends itself to this joined up approach, which is particularly pertinent in our current time of austerity and need to respond to issues of childhood health inequalities through more innovative health education models.

"C59 provides a foundation for stakeholders who influence young persons social, educational and well being life styles to make change, using this as a tool to communicate and further develop new opportunities."
School Staff



Find out more about Challenge 59

Watch the Challenge 59 Documentary here:

youtu.be/TJhUd34BAWw

Watch the children's 59 second films here:

www.challenge59.com/explore

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With thanks to

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Challenge 59 partners

Jo Rhodes
Artistic Director & Producer

Silke Arnold
Project Manager

**The primary school children
and teachers who committed their
time and energy to C59**

Evaluation advisory panel

Dr Agata Vitale, Bath Spa University
Dr Beccy Watson, Leeds Beckett University
Dr Emma Rich, University of Bath

University of Bath Alumni Fund

Project credits

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and co-produced by East London Dance.

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